

## Why I'm Riddled With Frustration, Part 1 - Romans 7:1-6 – February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012

- Before we get started I think it's incumbent upon me to preface today's sermon by mentioning that chapters and verses were added to the Bible.
- The reason that I say this right out of the shoot is, some chapter breaks can create disenfranchising divisions in the overall narrative of the text.
- Such is the case with the chapter that we have before us this morning. Romans chapters seven and eight must be taught and studied together.
- In order to do that and still remain true to the exposition of the epistle, I'll need to ask of you a favor of sorts as we navigate our way through this.
- More specifically, I'll ask for your patience and at the same time your willingness to step back from the Biblical tree to see the doctrinal forest.
- At the risk of sounding sensational, the next two chapters in this incredible book have the propensity to change how you live your life in Christ.
- Now, I am keenly aware that this is a very big and very bold introduction however, please consider the following facts about just chapter seven.
- The Apostle Paul uses the words; "I," "me," and "myself" a total of forty seven times, with no less than twenty eight of them being the word "I."
- Additionally, the words, "law" and or "commandment" are used a total of 29 times in Romans chapter seven, which only has a total of 25 verses.
- I know what you're thinking, so what's the point? The point is, "I" in and of "myself" can't keep God's "law" or "commandments," if it's up to "me."
- Furthermore, when "I" try "myself" thinking it's "me" in my own strength, any efforts in keeping God's "commandments" will be met with failure.
- When this happens its textbook in the sense that you can write the ending. You know all to well this only leads to condemnation and frustration.
- It's for this reason I chose to title this new series in this new chapter; "Why I'm Riddled With Frustration." Today will be part one of our study.
- So as to hit the ground running, I'd like to begin by asking a couple of questions, and please know that as I do, so too, do I ask them of myself.
- The first question is this, how often do you find yourself at your wits end throwing up your hands because everything you tried just isn't working?
- Secondly, what is your response to this frustration? Do you keep trying to figure it out, and work it out, in your own strength, and your own way?
- If so, could this be the explanation as to why it is that you are experiencing such frustration, and even condemnation, in you current situation?
- Has it gotten so bad that thriving in your Christian life is off the table because now you're not thinking about thriving; you're barely surviving?
- What if I told you it grieves the heart of God when He sees one of His own living a life that's been reduced to this "survival mode," as it were?
- Jesus Christ's crucifixion and resurrection wasn't only for us to have eternal life in heaven, it's also for us to have an abundant life here on earth.
- Before you accuse me of being a name it claim it, blab it grab it preacher, and tune me out, hear me out. This is what Jesus promised for us.

John 10:10b NKJV ... I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

John 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

- Our problem is that this thriving and abundant or fruitful life cannot become a reality in our Christianity vis-à-vis our own efforts under legalism.
- If I continue living my life this way, I will in effect sentence myself to a life of defeat never realizing that victorious and abundant life under grace.
- This is where, and this is when we see why it is that our Christian lives are so riddled with frustration with our first one found in verses 1 thru 3.

### 1. I choose to remain married to my legalism (Verses 1-3)

(1) Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? (2) For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. (3) So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.

- v1 Paul rhetorically asks them as brothers, who know the law, if they also know that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives.
- v2 Paul illustrates this by using the example of a married woman being bound to her husband as long as he's alive, but released once he's dead.
- v3 He then says she's an adulteress if she marries another man while her husband's alive, but not if he's dead, even if she marries another man.

- This means that just as death breaks the binding marriage relationship, so too does Christ's death break the binding relationship with the law.
- We are no longer bound in our relationship to the law, and are free to marry another. However, that doesn't necessarily mean that we will.
- Here's what I'm thinking, sometimes we can be so set in our old ways of doing things, so much so, that we are still married to those old ideas.

- Doing this will be evidenced by my staying in the rut, under the abusive and authoritative relationship with my legalism that I'm still bound to.
- This need not be, for I've been released from this marriage to the law, thus I am now free to enter into a new marriage relationship with another.
- Could staying married to my legalistic ideas be the reason that I'm experiencing such frustration in my life? I would suggest the answer is yes.

### 2. I keep on living as though I'm not dead (Verses 4-6)

(4) So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. (5) For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. (6) But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

- v4 He says that we also died to the law that we might belong to Christ, Who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.
- v5 He says when we're controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, bearing fruit for death.
- v6 He says how now dying to what once bound us we've been released from the law so we serve in the new way of the Spirit, not in the old law.

Charles Spurgeon of this writes; "There is no deliverance from its power but by death; but, blessed be God, we were crucified with Christ, and as new creatures we are under the rule of grace and are not under the dominion of law. Jesus is our husband, grace is the ruling principle of his house, and holiness is the fruit of the marriage. Glory be to God for this! Law provoked our old nature to rebel, grace impels the new nature to obey."

- This is what I absolutely love about the Apostle and this epistle. He presents a powerful principle then illustrates it with a picturesque example.
- Namely, that since we've died to the law through the body of Christ, the marriage bond is broken. We're no longer under its control over us.
- As Pastor Chuck Smith in his outstanding book "Why Grace Changes Everything" writes; "If you're dead, act like it." Listen to this illustration:

"Suppose I was caught robbing a bank. I am sent to jail and am put on trial. After many weeks, the jury comes in with a verdict: "We find him guilty." The judge then appoints the day when I am to be sentenced. I am looking at five to life because I used a gun and shot holes in the ceiling and scared the teller's silly. Finally, the day arrives that I am to appear before the judge for sentencing. The law has done its job. It has apprehended and condemned the guilty. I go into court and the judge says, "Will the defendant please rise." I stand up, and he says, "The court finds you guilty and you are sentenced to spend five years to life in the state penitentiary." The news is so bad that I have a heart attack and die right on the spot. Does the court keep my carcass in jail for five years? No. My death immediately sets me free from the condemnation of the law. My sentence has no more power over me because I am a dead man. This is the point Paul makes about those of us who, through faith in Jesus Christ, have been justified before God and are now living under His glorious grace. We are no longer living after the flesh; our old self is dead. The law had sentenced us to death. The demands of the law were fulfilled when we became crucified with Christ. The old me, and you, were crucified. ... We are dead to that old life. "I am crucified with Christ," writes Paul, "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). We don't live an old, selfish life anymore. Our ego-centered days are over. No longer do we live after the flesh. We are now free from the law, our sinful nature, and our awful guilt because our old, guilty man was crucified with Jesus Christ.

- I can't think of a better place in God's Word, and a better way at the end of a teaching, to partake together of communion at the Lord's Table.
- When the Apostle Paul writes that we also died to the law through the body of Christ, he gives us a clue as to the secret of our new life in Christ.
- Just as the body of Christ was broken for us, and instead of us, so too was the binding relationship, and it's control over us, also broken as well.

William Newell in his commentary on the book of Romans writes; "Through the body of Christ ... is a peculiar manner of speech. God speaks not here of propitiation or justification, which are through the blood of Christ. ... But God speaks here of that identification with Christ in which; in God's view, all believers were brought to the end of their history at the cross, so that their former [binding] relationships (to sin, law, the world), are [broken], ended.

Jon Courson says it this way, "Communion has two elements because, in taking the cup, we celebrate the fact that we are free from the penalty of sin. And in taking the body, we appropriate the fact that we are free from the power of sin. ... the shed blood of Jesus provides forgiveness of sin. But the breaking of His body provides victory over sin."

- I find it interesting that in the Apostle Paul's first letter to the church of Corinth, he rebukes them as it relates to how they partook of communion.
- He actually cites the source of their spiritual weakness, and physical illness, being how they'd partake of communion in an unworthy manner.
- Sadly, this has been the subject of much misunderstanding when it comes to the Lord's Table, as many fear they are not worthy to partake.

1 Corinthians 11:20-31 NKJV (20) Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. (21) For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of *others*; and one is hungry and another is drunk. (22) What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise *you*. (23) For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; (24) and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "**Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.**" (25) In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "**This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.**" (26) For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. (27) Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. (28) But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. (29) For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. (30) For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. (31) For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

- Please know that those to whom Paul is seemingly so harsh towards and blunt with were making a mockery of the Lord's Table at Communion.
- When it came to the bread, they ate with gluttonous, and when it came to the cup, they drank with drunkenness, both of which dishonored God.
- Today, let's honor God and celebrate, commemorate, and venerate, Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection breaking death's bond.
- In so doing, we can do so worthily and taste of that victory over sin in our breaking of the bread, and forgiveness of sin in our drinking of the cup.